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ABSTRACT

This publication on performance indicators and the education of adults in a community and locality context is one in a series of booklets written specially for managers in further and higher education in the United Kingdom. The series is intended to provide up-to-date information on current issues in vocational education and training, summaries of key research studies, and perspectives on these issues. The paper defines what a performance indicator is, lists its purposes, and discusses processes for measuring performance. Next are provided lists of questions and factors that managers need to consider when drawing up a performance audit, including perspectives of the student/customer, provider, and payer/commissioner. Measuring performance against relevant contextual factors such as equity and adequacy is discussed and there is focus on the values dimension and linking measures of performance with policy, resources, and planning. Lists of some typical aspects of policy, planning, and resource inputs are presented; questions regarding these aspects are provided for managers and those involved with performance indicator evaluations to ask. Finally, a quality framework is listed. Into this framework managers may organize performance indicators. Appendixes include a history of performance indicators in further education; the grid used by the Audit Commission; performance indicators from the schools' perspective--liaison with other agencies and the community; and recommendations for managing colleges efficiently. (YLB)

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Performance indicators and adult education

Pablo Foster

The Staff College

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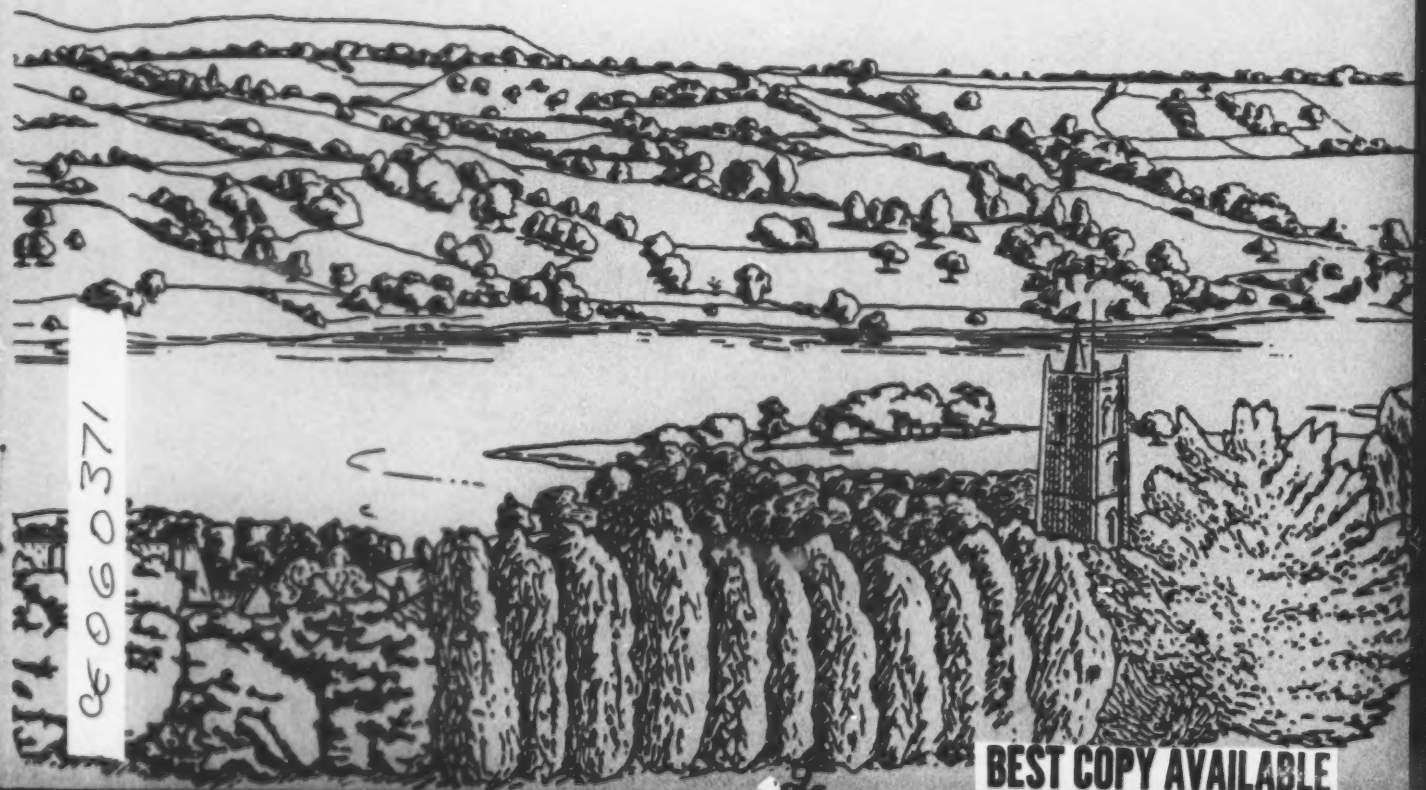

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Mendip Papers

Performance indicators and adult education

Pablo Foster

Contents

1 *Performance indicators and the education of adults in a community and locality context*

13 *Appendix 1*

15 *Appendix 2*

16 *Appendix 3*

17 *Appendix 4*

22 *Appendix 5*

23 *Appendix 6*

24 *Appendix 7*

25 *References*

25 *List of acronyms used*

Performance indicators and the education of adults in a community and locality context

What is a performance indicator?

A performance indicator is essentially a measure of performance that can support a judgement about quality or cheapness or value. Performance indicators have come to prominence with the rising demand for accountability. The pursuit of accountability requires something 'firm' upon which to fix judgements, some kind of evidence that intentions have been realised, purposes have been served, and responsibilities have been met. Value judgements are made on the basis of the performance indicator evidence, whether it is demonstrable, verbal, visual or statistical.

Generally, in the past, judgements about efficiency or quality were supported by whatever evidence could be collected retrospectively. With the growth, especially over the last decade, of governmental and other agency interest in accountability, the nature of the evidence about performance has become more carefully defined. The process of gathering evidence has become more sophisticated and the role of indicators is now more warily appreciated (see Appendix 1: History of performance indicators in further education).

An analogy from everyday life might help to introduce some of the ideas behind performance indicators. Take the dashboard of your car as an array of 'performance indicators'. The speed,

temperature and fuel gauges give you a continuous stream of data, but it is up to you to decide when or whether the data is actually informative. You may want to know when you are over the speed limit, when the engine is overheating, or how much fuel you have left. Consequently, you are usually supplied with another set of indicators which only operate when something is abnormal, aberrant or even dangerous, such as warning lights for worn brake shoes, unclicked seat belts, an unlocked boot or low engine oil. Performance indicators generally indicate performance or states but, as indicators, are only guides or triggers to identifying significant issues, not absolute measures in themselves.

The purposes of performance indicators

Performance indicators are used in the following ways:

- to measure performance;
- to identify and alert us to exceptions or deviations through monitoring;
- to identify changes or developments;
- to generate evidence of accountability;
- to clarify the objectives of, for example, a programme, course, department or organisation and assess if they are being achieved;
- to help evaluate the outcomes of particular activities;
- to identify areas for improvement, enhancement or economies;
- to raise issues about planning and the use of resources;
- to set standards for a service, organisation or section;
- to inform student/client/sponsor choice;
- to raise the profile of a given activity or service.

However, performance indicators are not the answer to all accountability or control or management problems.

Most indicators have been developed to measure inputs and outputs without taking into consideration the context of a performance or the background against which achievements were made (see Appendix 2: The Audit Commission grid). Indicators have to be related to their operational context and to equity factors, such as the make up of the student population, or the economic or employment characteristics of an area, so that the magnitude of achievements can be appreciated.

The ideal for performance indicators is that they should be relevant, agreed, free from bias, measurable, economically affordable and useful for development or quality aspirations. Yet the performance indicators do not in themselves provide judgements; they are aids to judgement and hence to management.

In summary, performance indicators should relate to the purpose or 'mission' of an organisation or service, and they should be as simple and as cheap to collect as possible. They should enhance the credibility and the quality of that service, and its continuance.

The processes for measuring performance

The process will reflect the main purposes for the use of performance indicators. For example, the audit sequence identified in the Further Education Unit's **Towards an educational audit** (1989) is shown below.

Establish:

1. why performance indicators need to be identified (purpose);
2. who will do it;
3. what will be collected and in what form;
4. how data will be collected and by whom;
5. to what standards and with what tolerances;
6. how the process will be resourced;
7. how everybody will be informed or involved;
8. how data will be assembled for analysis;
9. who will identify variations from expected norms or standards; and
10. what action will be taken and by whom.

Points 1, 5 and 9 are key political decisions. Subsequent events and benefits will., therefore, be heavily dependent upon staff's awareness of the principles and process, and upon the present dominance of numerative data.

Commentary on the processes

Managers may wish to consider the following questions when deciding the purpose of performance indicators.

- Are the performance indicators intended to measure the organisation's effectiveness or efficiency, or to contribute towards 'quality'?
- Are the performance indicators intended to uncover lapses from quality standards, so that managers need focus only on exceptions?
- Are the performance indicators also to be developmental, planning and strategic tools, which link with community needs, local authority adequacy and social equity?
- Are the performance indicators going to be linked in future with appraisal, assessment or contract renewal?

Managers may also wish to consider possible questions which arise in regard to who will measure performance. These relate to the range of stake-holders, participants and beneficiaries seen as key players in the organisation. For example, who will benefit from the information, the feedback and outcomes of a performance audit exercise? Who will be paid to collect the information and then process it and act upon it? The dimension of redundancy introduced by numerous interested parties can be shown in a simple grid (**Figure 1**).

If the interests can be restricted and key performance indicators found, this will limit the demands arising from the exercise. **Figure 1** shows why an array or 'basket' of different performance indicators might be needed.

The question as to what will be collected is very broad and the range of possible data is infinite. Managers need to establish what information will actually be of benefit to:

- the service;
- the students/customers;
- yourself and the staff;
- the community/locality;
- the resourcing of your work from a survival and developmental point of view.

On the basis of different interests, there is a wide range of perspectives on the kind of information worth collecting, and on the likely alternation between personal referencing (as varied as the individuals), norm referencing (often used for

Figure 1: Levels of interest in outcomes

	planned or expected outcomes	actual	unpredicted
public			
students			
staff			
payer			
commissioner			
inspectorate/ auditors			

classifying), and criterion referencing (used for accrediting). Qualitative data is seen as more 'difficult to collect'.

The following are lists of questions and factors which managers need to consider when drawing up a performance audit.

Possible student/customer perspective or interests:

- confidence/feelings at outset/later/end of programme,
- expectations at outset/later/end of programme,
- performance before/later/now etc.,
- competence level before/later/now etc.,
- progression towards goals,
- benefits perceived now/after one year/after three years etc.,
- enrolment arrangements/parking/sign-posting,
- comfortable place and welcoming staff.

Provider's perspective (1) - the service dimension:

- number of enquiries,
- number of applicants,
- number enrolled,
- number completing/not completing (plus reasons)/ interrupting (more appropriate to adults who have many demands on their time and many life roles),
- current satisfaction,
- 'value-added' factors, i.e. the difference made to lives (e.g. 'can do now' compared with 'couldn't do before') and entry qualification and leaving qualification.

Provider's perspective (2) - the marketing dimension:

- standard of reception services and enrolment,
- evidence of market demand (from student/ community groups/equal opportunity groups/agencies and employers etc.),
- extent of market penetration/proportion of entitlement, groups under equity/adequacy etc.,
- quality of publicity/services/after-care/ student and staff support/facilities,
- effectiveness of publicity,
- quality of policy statements/plans (business marketing and development) etc.

Provider's perspective (3) - the staffing dimension:

- equal opportunities recruitment principles and procedures,
- staff development opportunities,
- ratios of full-time/to part-time/to volunteers,
- rate of turnover, age spread,
- job loading - management/support staff, delivery staff/front-line/reception staff etc.,
- staff morale.

The payer's/commissioner's perspective:

1. Input (economic)

   - average lecturer hours (ALH),
   - room utilisation factors,
   - cost per head of (target) population,
   - staff morale.

2. Outputs (effectiveness) or 'quality/quantity'

   - average student hours (ASH),
   - attendance rates,
   - retention rates,
   - pass rates,
   - proportion placed/progressing,
   - success rates,
   - market penetration,
   - proportion of an identified client group/ market segment,
   - relationship of course to employment/ community base,
   - student satisfaction (MP*),
   - employer/sponsor satisfaction,
   - community satisfaction (MP*),
   - observed behaviour,
   - assessment reports,
   - reputation of organisation (MP*),
   - comparison with other organisations (MP*),
   - comparison with other services (MP*).

* MP = might be assessed by MORI Poll

3. Outputs over inputs (efficiency)

   - cost per full-time equivalent student (FTE) etc.,
   - cost per successful student,
   - cost per completing student,
   - cost per pass,

- cost per placed/progressing student,
- staff student ratio (SSR).

There are many other perspectives and 'stakeholders' we can use to help us to generate examples of performance indicators. However, as you can see, we already have such a list that if you tried to collect all items assiduously, you would turn into a full-time data farmer, rather than into an enhanced educator or educational manager. We have to keep matters in proportion and head off the danger of the collection of information about the processes of education superceding the actual provision itself. You could end up with a Concorde dashboard attached to a stationary bike!

Equity and adequacy

We have seen that performance cannot be judged by achievement alone, but needs to be measured against the relevant contextual factors. As long ago as 1984 the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) suggested that factors representative of the social and economic context of the LEA should be taken into account when designing indicators for the school sector, for example:

- pupils receiving free meals as a percentage of total school rolls;
- parental contribution as a percentage of cost of meals;
- children living in households whose head is a semi-skilled or unskilled manual worker or farm worker;
- an appropriate measure of employment;
- the proportion of pupils for whom English is not a first language.

Since then, the Department of Education and Science (DES) has adopted a number of other indicators relating to culture (incidence of special educational needs/learning difficulties and so on), physical condition (such as extent and trend upwards or downwards of external vandalism) and community links (institutions' objectives for community links etc.). For futher details see Appendix 3: Performance indicators from the schools' perspective.

These socio-economic, cultural and locality factors have been developed under the general concept of equity of entitlement and linked with the concept of adequacy of provision (in the Education Reform Act) to cover such factors as gender, ethnicity, age, poverty, disability, employment status, access to transport and lifestyle, when characterising a locality (such as a local authority area), or its component communities.

These equal opportunity factors can be gathered and mapped to give a profile of the area surrounding a particular institution or service. First of all there needs to be a definition of the catchment area. Attention is then focused on the local authority geographical boundaries, for statistical purposes. Next, the demographic factors that concern the work have to be identified.

The following items need to be considered when drawing up a profile of the given area:

- area of residence (by ward and by use of Central Postcode Directory, which allows conversion of student participant addresses into ward equivalents);
- age, for example using the bands 16 - 19; 20 - 24; 25 - 35; 36 - 45 and so on;
- gender, with ratios of male/female in different bands;
- ethnicity, e.g. African; Caribbean; UK; Irish; South Asian or others represented in significant numbers in your catchment area;
- employment status, e.g. economically active, seeking work, temporarily ill, on government training schemes, or vivationally active - not signing the unemployment register, permanently ill, retired, unwaged;
- disability, including levels of severity, based on generalised questions;
- social class, where information is available in general terms and by postal coding, but this can be difficult to gather from students (see in Appendix 4 under Identification of sources of information).

Once a profile of the locality/community has been developed a contrast can be made between the make-up of students/participants who benefit from provision, and those who do not. This data can then be used as evidence of the equity/adequacy of the

provision in that locality. The data can also be used for planning/marketing/resourcing purposes (see Appendix 4 for the Newham Community College example of a performance indicator framework based on adequacy/equity information).

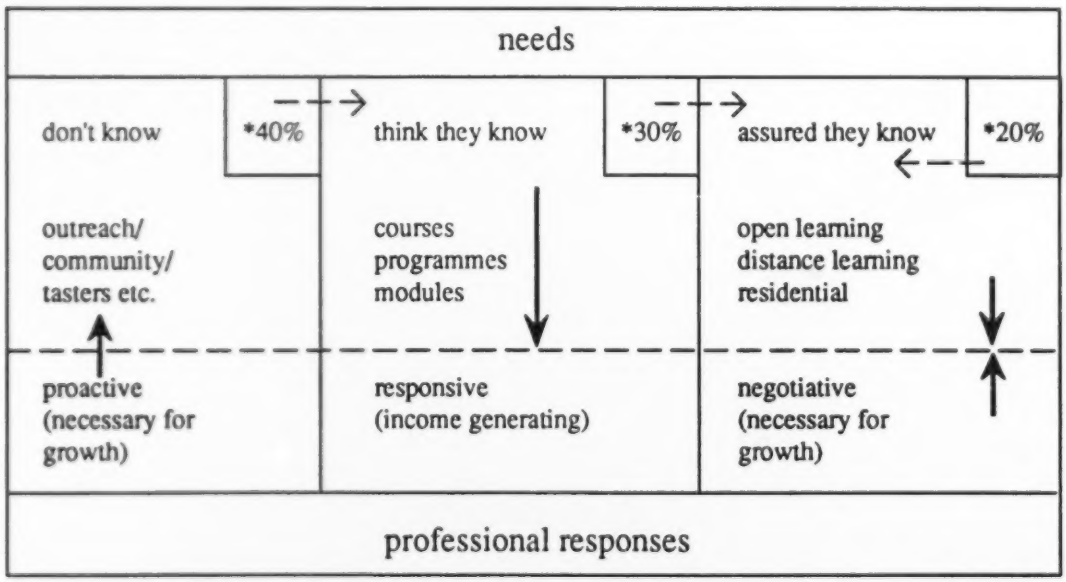
The values dimension

Many of the providers of education or learning opportunities for adults, whether in centre-based or community settings, subscribe to certain values and attitudes. Generally their policy will recognise equality of opportunity (if not equality of outcomes) as an important factor, even if their provision has not realised it. They also respect the need for adult autonomy in choice, largely because they recognise that adults have many roles in life, many demands upon their time and that, if they do participate, they prefer to choose when and how to do so. Their experience also brings them into contact with many adults whose previous experience of education has been less than supportive or life enhancing. They know that for society and communities to benefit, these individuals have to be reached, attracted and involved in learning opportunities. In a market economy this is seen as 'loss-leader' work which absorbs large amounts of staff time and resources rather than generating income. Yet this work is vital if we are to achieve growth in education and training, service development and release the latent potential in the UK adult population (**see Figure 2**).

Many adults have problems articulating their own complex motivation or managing their lives to fit in with traditional full-time courses. They need a range of styles, locations, groupings, timings and support. Most adults and community educators recognise the variety and complexity of the issues surrounding adult learning. Unfortunately, the most commonly recommended and used performance indicators do not, because they are based on full-time students taking full-time courses, in a traditional college setting.

The staff student ratio (SSR) which is often used as a crude performance indicator, whether at 'course level', 'departmental level' or 'institution level', is based on the above assumptions. The three variables used to calculate the SSR - the average class size (ACS), the average weekly lecturer class contact hours (ALH) and the average weekly taught hours of full-time students (ASH) - all reinforce the assumption that 16-19 year old full-time students attending full-time courses at FE colleges are the norm for the bulk of adult and community education. Furthermore, because such a clumsy norm is now integrated into local authority planning, much of adult community and basic education has to resort to formulae of resource weightings (whether by mode of attendance, special programme area or

Figure 2: Professional education and training responses to needs



* plus or minus 10%

——→ = potential flow

location) to secure a share of local authority resources. All the factors incorporated in **Managing colleges efficiently** (1987) are similarly inappropriate as performance indicators to the bulk of adult and community education (see Appendix 5: **Managing colleges efficiently** - the recommendations).

'Replan', the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE)/DES initiative, offers an alternative basis for looking at the different components when establishing performance indicators. Following American models it suggests three main elements to be considered (see **Figure 3**). This simple model can be expanded to incorporate some of the additional factors mentioned thus far (as well as new ones to be developed) to give **Figure 4.** Such a process allows us to spread out the key features of a particular form of provision and priorities among a large array of possible performance indicators.

Participation is another important value subscribed to by much adult and community provision, whether in decision making as learners or as members, or as deliverers (e.g. volunteers, tutors, support staff). Many would want their students/volunteers/staff to participate in the process of identifying, collecting and monitoring performance indicators for the various aspects of the enterprise's many processes. This can be a long, complex and wearing business, involving the following:

- the clarification of the organisation's policy objectives, unique contribution and role;
- the identification of key roles and activities and amount of time spent pursuing each of these;
- the identification of those behaviours, practices and procedures which would make for improvements in quality in addition to the loads imposed by collecting, monitoring, analysing, reporting and acting on performance indicators.

This participation is often underpinned by the contribution of 'gift work' - time given through volunteering or additional but unpaid work. This gift work can be logged and counted under a social audit which shows all the resources put into a service.

One approach to the problem of 'performance indicator overload' is to begin with one group - for example, with outreach workers, field/area teams, Adult Basic Education (ABE) staff or support staff and ask:

- what are the policy objectives they are realising? Spell them out;
- are there any qualitative aspects to their work that might be output measures? For example, the number of play groups, literacy students, meetings or classes, which they service;
- what are the main outcomes of their work? For instance, growth of confidence, child development, family harmony, self reliance, new skills, community involvement, etc., for different groups;
- what are the main indicators of customer satisfaction?;
- what are the minimum resources required to achieve the policy objectives and the outcomes? That is to say, the lowest cost consistent with quality and quantity. What could be done with more resources, on the same terms?;
- what features show that the resources are being used in the most efficient way (e.g. back-up activities/clients when something does not happen as planned)?

Figure 3: Components for establishing performance indicators

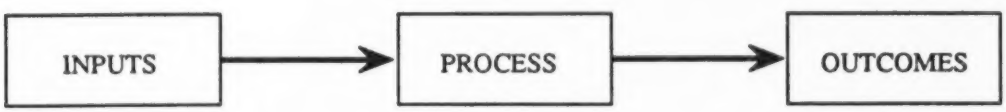
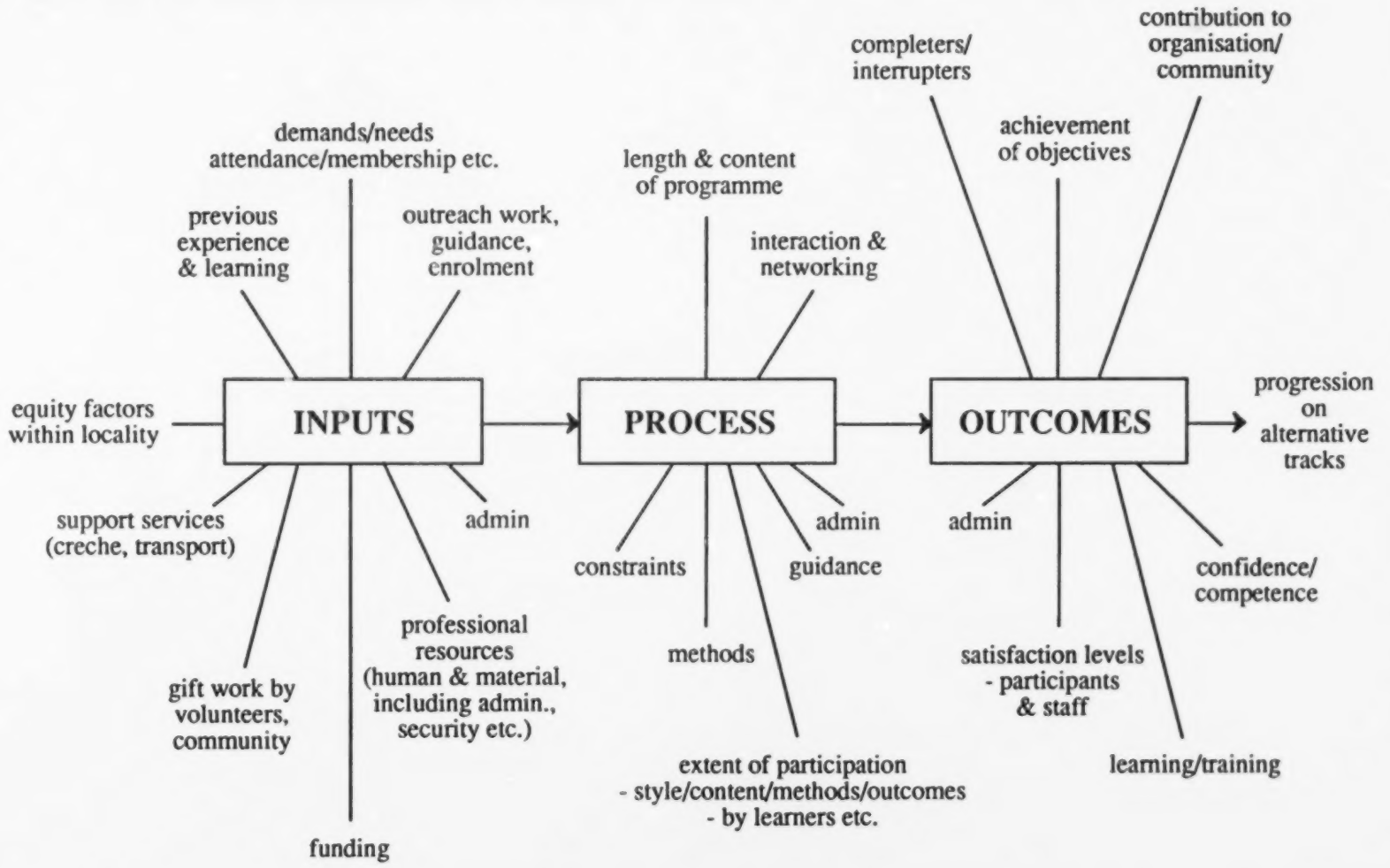


Figure 4: Performance indicator development chart



12

In this way, performance indicators can be developed as tools that help you to be clearer, help you to plan and help you to evaluate what you do.

For those involved in partnerships with community groups, other agencies or other local authority services, performance indicators can help clarify each agency's complementary contributions and different objectives. They can help managers educate other contributors about the part they play in the local mosaic (see Appendix 6: Performance indicators for youth work).

Many people involved in determining performance indicators for the education of adults are anxious about reducing the 'eternal knobbliness' of what they do to unrepresentative numerative data. They recognise that their ethos and values should be reflected in the nature of the data they collect and that what suits a computer may not satisfy them.

One way to approach this is to provide 'structured information'. In other words, to grade qualitative information so that different performance levels or levels of empowerment can be recognised. Here is an example from youth work.

Level 4 - young people are fully involved and supported in deciding on the activities and direction of their youth group.

Level 3 - young people are extensively involved in decision making, but there is still unmet potential in this regard.

Level 2 - young people are given the chance, and take the opportunity to influence the activities of their youth group to an extent that is just acceptable.

Level 1 - young people take little or no useful part in decisions affecting their youth group.

The application of such performance indicators should help sort out the rhetoric from the reality.

Development and quality

Many workers in the fields of education and training for adults are rightfully anxious about inappropriate performance measures being imposed. If we look at the framework of official policy objectives and initiatives, (see Appendix 7: The framework), we can see how many interests and agencies are now converging on the measurement, accountability and control of education and training opportunities, and, therefore, how many have a vested interest in performance indicators. As a result of legislation, local authorities and the DES will require performance indicators for their planning, monitoring and inspection functions. These in turn will influence resourcing. Auditing processes, whether by CIPFA or the Audit Commission, will also require and use performance indicators for measuring accountability and resource use.

The negotiation of salaries and conditions of service will be increasingly informed by the evidence arising from performance measures. If adult and community workers, with the involvement of their public representatives, do not design and introduce their own developmental measures, less appropriate ones will be imposed sooner or later. Some local authorities are already taking NVQ levels as appropriate measures of quality for adult attainment, irrespective of the narrowness of the vocational framework, when contrasted with the vivational framework of most adults.

Other fears have been alluded to earlier: that the process of the collection of information (without supporting management information systems or resources) may serve only to distract people from their proper educational activities, or simply overwhelm the part-timers and volunteers with an administrative load for which they see no benefits and no pay. Since adult and community education are so heavily dependent upon part-time and gift workers, it is important to allay these fears.

However, if we are to develop a quality framework which gives full value and support to the main delivery force then we must, in our own interest, start measuring, recovering and using information about contributions, achievements and value in a positive, proactive way.

We must link measures of performance with policy, resourcing and planning, so that what is often experienced by students and staff as marginal provision becomes central to the flexible availability of learning and training opportunities in any locality. The collection of information need not overwhelm us. Though we will want eventually to build up a wide array of performance indicators, we do not have to do everything all at once from the outset. Monitoring performance can be like a lighthouse,

with a beam illuminating each sector of your work in turn. There is no need to collect all information for everybody: sample and extrapolate as appropriate. There are ways of beginning small and keeping the load manageable.

Measuring inputs

To improve the quality of work both inputs and outputs should be monitored. Below are some typical aspects of policy, planning and resourcing inputs, regarding which managers and those involved with performance indicator evaluations should ask the following questions of their authority or organisation.

Policy

1. Is there a clear policy and code of implementation to work within?

2. Are there equal opportunities and equity factors?

3. Is there democratic client/student/user involvement in the creation of aims and objectives for the service, for staff, for students and for community people?

4. Are there open evaluation and review procedures, with managerial involvement?

Planning

1. Is there a development plan for the service? Are managers involved in its formulation?

2. Is it based upon demographic factors, needs analysis, market research, equity and adequacy concerns? Are all the client groups reflected in the planning process?

3. How have targets been determined? Who has been involved?

4. Are the targets related proportionally to resourcing?

Resourcing

1. What levels of resourcing will be available? How will the entitlement be calculated? By full-time equivalent students, by historical precedent, by equity factors?

2. How does your resourcing match up with comparable organisations/services - according to LEA, CIPFA, Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) etc.?

3. Does the resourcing include amounts for learning support, management support, staff development, information collection and processing, marketing etc.?

4. Has gift work been calculated and logged for volunteers, part-time staff, full-time staff etc. in a social audit framework, to show all inputs into the service?

All the above might be called a basic reassurance for a viable organisation. However, the pursuit of quality and growth means that there are a number of additional issues that may arise and need to be addressed.

Provision and services

1. With regard to the development of quality learning and training opportunities, what will be the rationale for any particular programme/curriculum offer to different target groups? Will you be able to publish a guaranteed 'bottom line' in terms of hours, weeks, times, group size and style options (e.g. formal, informal, accredited, not accredited, attendance-based, open learning etc.)?

2. What states of accessibility can be offered/ guaranteed?

3. What support for learning services can be offered/guaranteed (e.g. information, guidance, counselling, advocacy, brokerage, follow-up, etc.)?

4. What range of accommodation and locations will be on offer, and to what standard (e.g. local - can walk to in ten minutes; drive to; informal, with variable seating; formal, with fixed seating; children or adult toilets available; well equipped with learning aids; canteen facilities; car parking, etc.)?

Staffing

1. With regard to staffing, what range of skills, experience, proficiency etc. will be on offer? What support ratios will exist (e.g. how many tutors to students; how many full-timers to support; how many volunteers/ part-timers)?

2. How much management support will there be for co-ordinators, centre managers, etc? How much administration and clerical support will there be for the deliverers and for the managers?

3. Will there be any equity between staff and the locality/community, both at worker/tutor or management levels?

4. Will there be specialist back up and support, with locality-wide responsibilities (e.g. language, adult basic education, special needs)?

5. Are all staff on contracts compliant with employment law, equal opportunities guidance, etc.?

6. Are there funds for staff and organisational development? A quality service cannot be run with over-stretched, undervalued and unsupported staff.

External relations

1. What evidence can be collected to show the benefits users derive from the service?

2. What evidence can be collected to demonstrate the organisation's impact on communities/the locality and wider field?

3. Which agencies are serviced, liaised with or made demands on? How is mutual satisfaction monitored?

4. What market research is conducted? Is market intelligence collected?

5. What kind of publicity is there? Is it matched in language and media to different equity groups?

6. What reception services are there? In how many languages?

7. What outreach/inreach services are on offer?

8. What after-care is on offer?

9. For how much of the year are services available? At what times (to e.g. shift workers, single parents, the elderly)?

Exposure

To what extent are the organisation's activities evaluated by its users/students/customers?

1. Are there ways of collecting students'/users' perceptions of what is on offer?

2. Are there ways of collecting sponsoring clients' perceptions of the activities, services and products?

3. Are there ways of gathering information about how the service compares with other local authority/private services? (e.g. a MORI poll.)

4. Are there ways of finding out how staff perceive each other in terms of support (e.g. reciprocal appraisal)?

5. Are successes and aspirations published and proclaimed?

Avoiding overload

Few organisations concerned with learning opportunities for adults will be able to afford the full benefits and rigours of the British Standard 5750 Quality systems. Probably even fewer managers who have wilted through the checklist of questions in this paper will feel that performance indicators are a blessing to be welcomed. However, they will be necessary and they can be very useful. Going for quality provides both a vision and a defence.

Managers will almost certainly need two kinds of performance indicators:

a) a general set, applicable to all aspects of

activities, such as would satisfy the Audit Commission Grid (Appendix 2);

b) more specific performance indicators that measure the success/quality etc. of the particular programmes/courses/activities and the organisation in achieving its aims and objectives.

Managers might organise performance indicators into a quality framework, made up of related groups, as for instance in the six listed below.

1. The quality of the premises as a learning/ training environment - from both public and staff's viewpoints:

- total premises expenditure,
- proportion of premises accessible to disabled/ elderly students,
- availability and cost of parking,
- proximity of premises to target client groups,
- availability of appropriate learning aids and materials (e.g. copiers/canteen/creche/ library/OHPs,
- facilities and standards appropriate to adults.

2. The quality of the outreach/publicity/ admission/enrolment and learning experience:

- number of local venues/sizes of groups/ courses etc.,
- frequency/mode/ease of enrolment/ admission,
- appropriateness and quality of publicity/ information with regard to equity factors,
- proportions of appropriate staff/languages to customer/user groups,
- programmes/courses, using questionnaires and probes,
- staff support ratios (in terms of management/ administration, clerical, personnel) for delivery or front-line staff/volunteers etc.,
- demand compared with places available, expressed as locality potential and actual seekers.

3. The quality of student/user support:

- proximity and accessibility of student support services,
- quality of staff (by experience, training, qualifications etc.),
- level of clients' satisfaction with support services and arrangements,
- ratios of customer-to-support staff,
- quality of after-care service.

4. The quality of organisation development and professional activities:

- expenditure on staffing/by delivery/ management/support,
- range and level of staff skills/expertise across outreach/coaching/teaching/languages/ training/centre management/staff or personnel management/resource management/information and guidance/counselling etc.,
- frequency and level of staff development activities/percentage of resources on staff development,
- level of dependency upon volunteers, gift work, grants, income generation.

5. Customer facts and performance outcomes:

- number of enquiries
- number of people using all service/facilities,
- number of people taking up courses,
- number of people interrupting with reasons if available (not 'drop outs'),
- satisfaction details by activity, programme or course; by mode of attendance; by equity categories,
- numbers satisfying own aims,
- numbers by destination/progression/ continuation along chosen tracks,
- numbers seeking exams/accreditation/ recognition,
- customers' assessment of benefits or 'value added difference' made to their lives.

6. Locality profile features and matching up with actual users:

- matching between percentage of target groups in locality/communities and those actually taking up offers/activities/provision (give percentages potentially, as planned and as achieved),
- matching up target groups with preferred modes of attendance/courses/activities etc.,
- levels and range of participation of community representatives in organisation/ service.

With this kind of framework, managers can choose and design their own performance indicators and they will be able to satisfy most of the demands upon them for evidence of performance, quality or value for money. These exercises will also be generating information to help with planning and for the unending struggle towards the chimera of excellence. Nil carborundum.

Appendix 1: History of performance indicators in further education

1. The Audit Commission Survey

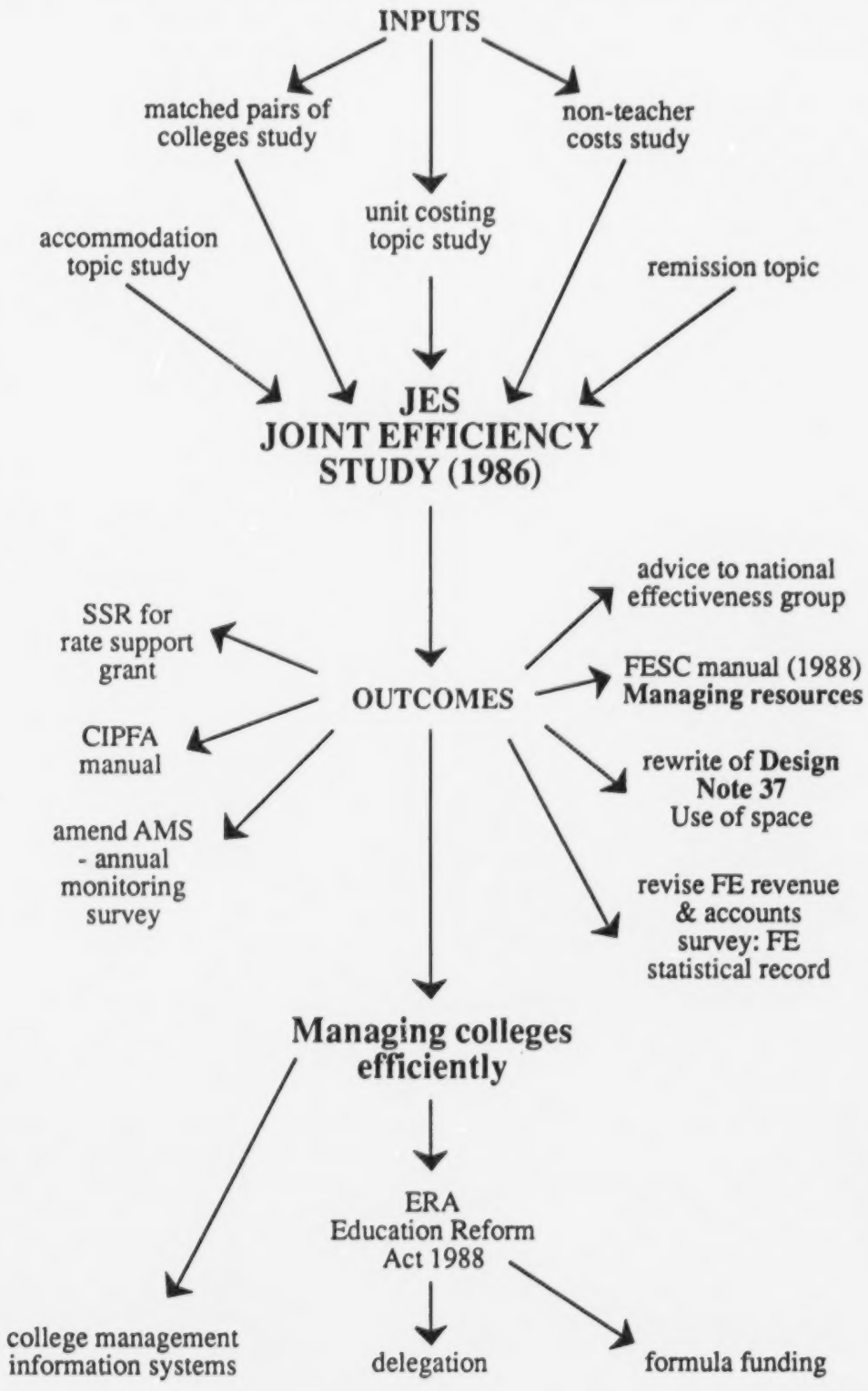
Obtaining better value from further education (1985) examined 165 polytechnics and further education colleges. Suggested main improvement opportunities were in:

- marketing further education courses;
- tailoring teaching resources to demand and achieving better value by going for an SSR of 12:1, avoiding over-grading of staff, limiting remission to four per cent and avoiding over-teaching on full-time courses;
- better cost recovery;
- tight control over non-teaching costs;
- current working practices and conditions should become more conducive to value for money.

2. The Joint Efficiency Study (1986)

A joint DES and LEAs, Audit Commission initiative, whose report was published as **Managing colleges efficiently** (1987). See **Figure 5** for inputs and outcomes.

Figure 5: Joint Efficiency Study inputs and outcomes



Appendix 2: The Audit Commission grid

Figure 6: The Audit Commission grid

level 1	level 2	level 3	level 4	individual and collective well being
inputs (labour, capital, materials)	**operational outputs**	**service outputs**	**service effects**	
e.g. works dept →	jobs done	waiting time, repairs standard	improved living standards	**national integrity**
e.g. planning →	number of applications	achievement of planning aims	improvement in the total environment	
e.g. environment →	number of visits	reduction in unfit food premises	improved local environment health	**social justice**
e.g. leisure and recreation →	attendances	proportion of population served	reduced crime, vandalism, improved personal health	**national wealth**
e.g. waste disposal →	tons collected	premises served	improved personal health	
e.g. transport →	passenger miles	levels of service	improved mobility of population	**individual fulfilment**
	operational efficiency	operational effectiveness	service effectiveness	contributions to well-being

ratios

Appendix 3: Performance indicators from the schools' perspective - liaison with other agencies and the community

Issues

The issues related to the school and the community fall into three broad categories.

1. Effectiveness of communications:

- with governing bodies,
- with parents and the community,
- with LEA.

2. Relationships with the local community

In this category there are a series of key questions to be posed:

- the extent to which the school involves the community in discussions on education and on school life in general;
- involvement of members of the wider community as co-opted governors and the openness of the governing bodies to the press and the public;
- the extent to which the school publicises its activities;
- the links between the school and local industry/commerce.

3. Schools with community provision

Key issues which are raised here are:

- the use of school premises;
- involvement of adults in the running of the community provision;
- client satisfaction, i.e. the extent to which the community facility meets the needs of the local community;
- the quality of the community provision;
- the cost of the community provision.

Indicators

1. Communication and relationships:

- time devoted to the training of governors;
- mechanisms/structures by which the community can be encouraged to be involved in discussions on the education provided and school life in general;
- the constitution of governing bodies and specific community representation on governing bodies;
- specific arrangements for governors' meetings to be open to the public;
- attempts made by the school to market and publicise its activities;
- parental involvement in school activities, such as parents' evening, parent and teacher associations, friends of the school;
- links with local industry/commerce; work experience; staff secondments to and from industry.

2. Schools with specific community provision:

- published policy on community involvement;
- arrangements for public involvement in community activities;
- policy on curriculum provision for the community; its aims, objectives and targets, to include providers to community needs and programmes for staff development, and staffing levels;
- the levels of resourcing for this curriculum, covering short term and long-term teaching and resource requirements, including ancillary staff;
- the level of public involvement in the curriculum;
- mechanisms for monitoring attendance rates, for assessing levels of satisfaction with the service and for for addressing problems of changing demands;

- arrangements for liaison between the governing body/management committee and the community users of the school;

- arrangements for monitoring costs of the centre;

- arrangements for the management of the community activity, and dual user arrangements;

- comparisons with provisions in other schools/institutions.

Appendix 4: Steps towards the measurement of adequacy at Newham Community College*

* The content of this appendix is reproduced with the kind permission of Newham Community College, and illustrates how such a programme might be timetabled.

1. Definition of catchment area

Coterminous with LA:

- LA community education policy,
- single-college authority,
- college 'mission',
- geographically compact area.

2. Identification of demographic descriptors

Influenced by availability of information, levels of disaggregation, capacity for updating, compatibility with information collected on student body, usefulness in identifying incongruities between catchment area make-up and college take-up:

a) area of residence, by electoral ward inside Newham:

- most demographic information available on ward basis;

- ward allows access to a wide range of information collected with respect to very small areas. Newham is characterised by a great deal of demographic variation;

- Central Postcode Directory allows conversion of student addresses (collected by post-code) to ward equivalents.

b) age, in bands 16-19; 20-24; 25-35; 35-45; 45-55; 65 and above:

- 16-19 and 20-24 = specific market segments characterised by common needs requiring their own specialised marketing strategies;

- 10-year bands probably allow optimum level information analysis;

- software will deliver information for any age profile.

c) gender

d) ethnicity - African/Caribbean; UK; Irish; Asian; other:

- used by LA to assess effectiveness of equal opportunities policies;

- identify specific ethnic groups known to be represented in significant proportions in catchment area;

- piloting of categories produced a 90 per cent plus positive response rate.

e) employment status, according to whether economically active - in work, seeking work (signing unemployment register), temporarily ill, on government training schemes; or economically inactive - permanently sick, retired, not signing the unemployment register (= the 'unwaged'):

- same as those used by the 1981 Census;

- identify the 'unwaged'; large potential client group - often women/single parents, not actively seeking particular form of employment/education/training, but would benefit from college provision.

f) disability, according to 10 'levels of severity':

- information of 'severity' rather than 'type' more useful for integrated provision;

- enrolment form asks generalised questions about disability because specific questions are liable to be intrusive/insensitive, and deter response.

Descriptors not used:

- travel patterns, due to lack of information since 1981 Census;

- prior qualifications or experiences because there are no standard forms of classification available nationally for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL);

- social class. Information is available about the class composition of communities but it is very difficult to gather such information about the College's actual clientele.

3. Identification of sources of information

a) The 1981 Census returns

Wide range of information at variety of disaggregation levels divided into Large Areas (provinces, economic planning regions, shire counties, metropolitan counties, districts) and Small Areas (parliamentary constituencies, districts, electoral wards, enumeration districts).

b) The Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys (OPCS)

Regular publications on wide range of demographic issues are obtainable in most LA reference libraries. Titles include Monitor PP1, Monitor PP3, Labour force survey, The prevalence of disability among adults, Large area statistics.

c) The London Research Centre (residuary body of GLC)

Produces a wide range of demographic reports for small areas inside London.

d) The Training Agency and National On-Line Management Information Systems (NOMIS)

For information on economic activity and unemployment - large and small areas.

4. Develop computerised system

a) software package linked to College student database, curriculum offer, catchment area demographic model. Conversion to EMIS planned;

b) menu-driven/user-friendly/input, view, analysis, and help screens;

c) produces information on the following headings.

Performance indicators

1. actual enrolment/target enrolment,
2. successes/enrolment,
3. completers/enrolment,
4. progressions/completers.

These are shown at levels of institutional disaggregation - whole college/college centre/ college department/ centre department; and at units of course organisation/delivery - course/programme area/Training Occupational Classifications (TOC)/ mode of attendance. The programme gives 14 different combinations of institutional level and organisational unit.

Adequacy/equity information

Comparison between college take-up and catchment area make-up in respect of any one of the six demographic descriptors or any of the following combinations:

- age, gender, and area of residence. Can be correlated in any combination, e.g. to compare the number of 16-24 year old female college students living in a given cluster of wards in the south of the Borough with a group of Borough residents sharing the same demographic characteristics;

- ethnic origin is compatible with above; ethnic origin of students can also be taken into consideration;

- employment status is compatible with age, gender, and ward but not ethnicity. It can replace ethnicity in the example above;

- information on disability available only for Newham as a whole; compatible with the age structure of the model but not gender.

Effectiveness/adequacy/equity combinations

There is a wide range of information showing the extent to which effectiveness, as revealed by the four indicators listed above, differs among varying client groups, as defined by the demographic descriptors. For example:

- compare drop-out rate of Asian women on Part-Time Day (PTD) courses in department M with drop-out rate of Asian women on Full-Time (FT) courses in department M;

- compare drop-out rate of Asian women on PTD courses in department M with drop-out rate of Asian men on same courses in department M;

- compare drop-out rate of Asian women on PTD courses in department M with drop-out rate of all students on same courses in department M;

- compare drop-out rate of Asian women on PTD courses in department M with drop-out rate of Asian women on all PTD or FT courses in college.

5. *Field test the system.*

6. *Prepare performance evaluation framework*

(see **Figure 7**)

Figure 7: Performance evaluation framework

Date	Actions
Feb 1990	Agree three year plan for 1990-93: establish timetable for performance review
Apr-May 1990	Finalise curriculum offer for 1990/91
Sept-Nov 1990	Enter student enrolment data for 1990/91
Nov 1990	• Call up total enrolment figures • Call up actual enrolment: target enrolment ratio for 1990/91, in - standard College report format - standard Joint Efficiency Study (JES) report format
Nov 1990	Call up equity enrolment report for 1990/91
Nov-Dec 1990	Enter data on early leavers 1990/91
Dec 1990	Call up early leaver 'reasons for leaving' lists 1990/91
Feb 1991	Agree three year plan for 1991-94: establish timetable for performance review
Apr-May 1991	Finalise curriculum offer for 1991/2
June-Aug 1991	Client perception exercise 1990/91 - 10 per cent sample Students' Perceptions of Colleges (SPOC) survey - 20 per cent sample Employers' Perceptions of Colleges (EPOC) survey
July-Aug 1991	• Enter 'reasons for leaving' data on leavers since Dec 1990 • Enter data on completers 1990/91
Sept 1991	Call up standard college report on 1990/91 leavers/reasons for leaving
Sept 1991	Enter student enrolment data for 1991/92
Sept 1991	Call up completers: enrolment ratio for 1990/91, in - standard College report format - standard JES report format
Sept 1991	Call up equity completers report for 1990/91
Sept-Oct 1991	Enter 'qualifications' data for 1990/91
Sept-Oct 1991	Receive results of SPOC/EPOC survey for 1990/91
Oct-Nov 1991	Collect and enter data on progressions and destinations for 1990/91
Nov 1991	• Call up total enrolment figures for 1991/92 • Call up actual enrolment: target enrolment ratio for 1991/92, in - standard College report format - standard JES report format
Nov 1991	Call up equity enrolment report for 1991/92
Nov-Dec 1991	Enter data on early leavers 1991/92
Nov-Dec 1991	Call up progression: completion ratio for 1990/91, in - standard College report format - standard JES report format

Date	Actions
Nov-Dec 1991	Call up qualifications enrolment ratio for 1990/91, in - standard College report format - standard JES report format
Nov-Dec 1991	Call up equity progressions report for 1990/91
Nov-Dec 1991	Call up equity qualifications report for 1990/91
Dec 1991	Call up early leaver 'reasons for leaving'lists 1991/92
Feb 1991	Agree three year plan for 1992-95: establish timetable for performance review
Apr-May 1992	Finalise curriculum offer for 1992/93
June-Aug 1992	Client perception exercise - 10 per cent sample SPOC survey - 20 per cent sample EPOC survey
July-Aug 1992	• Enter data on leavers since Dec1991 • Enter data on completers
Sept 1992	Call up standard college report on 1991/92 leavers/reason for leaving
Sept 1992	Enter student enrolment data for 1992/93
Sept 1992	Call up completers: enrolment ratio for 1991/92, in - standard College report format - standard JES report format
Sept 1992	Call up equity completers report for 1991/92
Sept-Oct 1992	Enter 'qualifications' data for 1991/92
Sept-Oct 1992	Receive results of SPOC/EPOC Surveys Surveys for 1991/92
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Nov-Dec 1992	Call up qualifications: enrolment ratio for 1991/92, in - standard college report format - standard JES report format
Nov-Dec 1992	Call up equity progressions report for 1991/92
Nov-Dec 1992	Call up equity qualifications report for 1991/92
Dec 1992	Call up early leaver 'reasons for leaving' lists 1992/93

Appendix 5: Managing colleges efficiently - the recommendations

Two Es for performance indicators

Efficiency should not be considered in isolation from **effectiveness**. The use of efficiency indicators requires:

- establishment of objectives;
- agreement on nature of use;
- management processes linking performance with resource allocation.

LEAs and colleges should ensure that these principles are applied.

Performance indicators:

- are needed in manageable numbers to build up a picture and prompt questions;
- should identify divergencies between comparable activity and inform 'good practice';
- should not focus on minor variations;
- should be used to compare performance against targets to promote action on improvement;
- should inform setting of Rate Support Grant settlement;
- should be collected nationally and published to promote good practice;
- should not be too much of a burden to collect.

Student staff ratios and unit costs

SSRs will continue to be an important indicator of efficiency but their limitations should be recognised. A unit costing system (proposed in outline) to be used nationally should be introduced as soon as possible. Colleges should build performance indicators into their management practices. Guidance on space utilisation should be revised and reissued. The current 64 per cent target should be reviewed. The following should be the principle indicators:

- SSR,
- non-teaching cost per FTE student,
- course costs per FTE student,
- completion rates and cost per FTE completing student,
- qualification rate and cost per FTE qualifying student,
- progression/placement rates and cost per progressing/placed student.

All these should be in general use in colleges within five years.

Three Es for performance indicators

Types of indicators - 1

Economic

Those which are wholly concerned with the costs of provision (or inputs), for example:

- average lecturer hours (ALH),
- lecturer contract ratio,
- room utilisation factor,
- cost per head of population,
- cost per FTE student.

Effectiveness

Those wholly concerned with the quality (and perhaps quantity) of the results (or outputs), for example:

- average student hours (ASH),
- attendance rates,
- retention rates,
- completion rates,
- pass rates,
- proportion placed or progressing,
- student success rates,
- market penetration,
- proportion of identified client type,
- relationship of course portfolio to employment base,
- student satisfaction,
- community satisfaction,
- student behaviour,
- staff morale,
- assessment of external and internal 'validators',
- college reputation.

Types of indicator - 2

Efficiency

Those concerned with both effectiveness and cost (outputs and inputs), for example:

- cost per successful student,
- cost per completing student,
- cost per pass,
- cost per placed/progressing student,
- student/staff ratio,
- cost per FTE student.

Appendix 6: Performance indicators for youth work (Scotland)

The effectiveness questions

1. Outputs

The number of different types of youth groups/ experience available.

The number of young people in each category of youth work.

For the various categories of youth work, what are the rates of staying-on (a good thing), 'turnover' (a very good thing, as it implies successful progress through the aims of the youth work), and drop-out (a bad thing).

2. Outcomes

Structured information on young people's participation in decisions affecting their youth groups. Extent of responsibility given to young people in the centre. Take-up of other educational opportunities as a result of Community Education Service (CES) work. Structured information on young people's movement away from self-damaging activity such as drug-taking or crime.

The economy questions

For the various categories of youth work what are:

- the costs of full-time staff,
- the costs of part-time staff,
- the hours of voluntary commitment,
- the budgets,
- the building spaces used.

All of these questions should be considered in relation to an identified appropriate norm, such as national average or last year's figures.

The efficiency questions

For the various categories of youth work, what are the total costs (see the economy questions) in relation to the numbers of young people involved, and the staying-on, 'turnover' and drop-out rates.

Structured information on the time required for youth workers (all types) to achieve a satisfactory 'turnover', and the actual time spent.

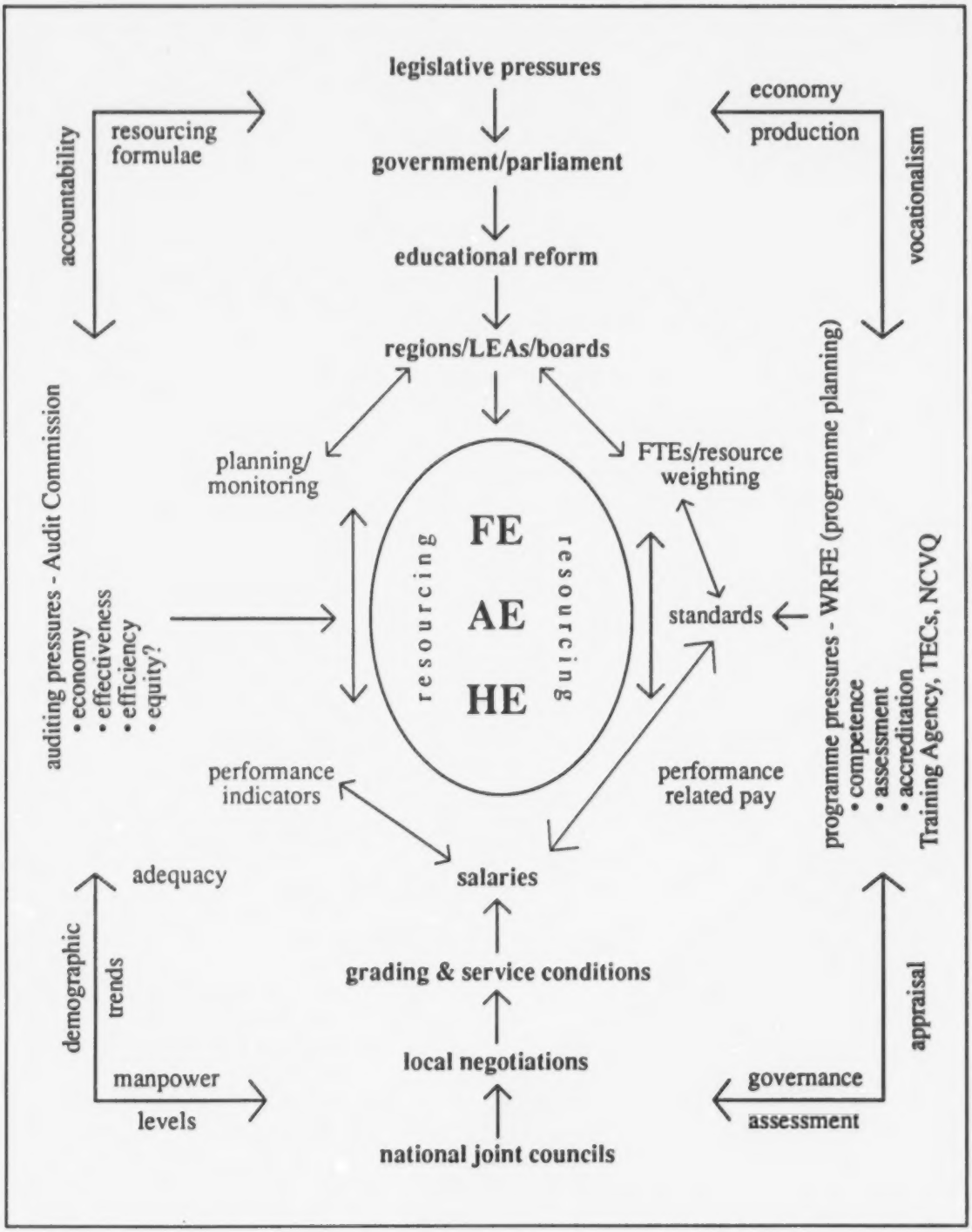
Structured information on the balance between high and low cost activities.

Performance indicators for management

- how closely does the expenditure of resources relate to the stated priorities for work?;
- structured information on the setting of objectives;
- amount of voluntary time recruited into community education;
- continuity of staffing;
- financial and other support to voluntary organisation.

All of the above are given only for purposes of illustration and there are significant issues to be resolved. They show that much of the information which would be used for performance indicators is already basic to any discussion of how work is progressing. Developing performance indicators requires that such information is organised, collected, analysed, and presented systematically. Doing this should help community education staff to clarify their own objectives, methods and self-evaluation. It is thus crucial that the process of identifying and developing performance indicators should gather widespread support and involvement for it has the potential to be a creative and cohesive process.

Appendix 7: The framework



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List of acronyms and initials used in this Mendip Paper

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ACS	Average Class Size
ALBSU	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
ALH	Average Lecturer Hours
AMS	Annual Monitoring Survey
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
ASH	Average Student Hours
CES	Community Education Service
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
DES	Department of Education and Science
EPOC	Employers' Perceptions of Colleges
ERA	Education Reform Act
FE	Further Education
FESC	Further Education Staff College (now The Staff College)
FEU	Further Education Unit
FT	Full-Time
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GLC	Greater London Council
JES	Joint Efficiency Study
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
MORI	Market and Opinion Research International
NIACE	National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education
NOMIS	National On-Line Management Information Systems
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OPCS	Officeof Population, Censuses and Surveys
PTD	Part-Time Day (Course)
SPOC	Students' Perceptions of Colleges
SSR	Staff Student Ratio
TOC	Training Occupational Classifications

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The Mendip Papers are a new series of booklets written specially for managers in further and higher education. As managers and governors take on new responsibilities and different roles they face new challenges, whether in the areas of resource and financial management or in the pursuit of quality, the recruitment of students and the development of new curricula. The Mendip Papers provide advice on these issues and many more besides.

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